

Governance Matters: How is it working for Canadians?

Terms of Reference

Overview

In Canada, the relationships among elected representatives, political staff and the public service are not clearly defined in practice or in statute. While this provides opportunities for flexibility and responsiveness, it can also lead to confusion among the public – and also among key participants – about the respective roles that different officials play in Canada’s Westminster system of governance. The main objective of the *Governance Matters* project is to provide an independent analysis of the developing roles at the executive level of elected governments, political staff and the public service in order to promote a better, clearer understanding of their roles and relationships. This project will serve as a valuable resource, by providing a dispassionate look at how the system works.

Objectives

1. Provide a clear definition of the Westminster system of responsible government and its evolution in Canada, identifying the key principles that inform its operation. This will serve as a foundation for the project and help to clarify how the system works.
2. Provide an analysis of the concentration of authority common in many forms of governance today, and address the countervailing forces that might hold this power in balance, including: parliament, parliamentary committees, cabinet, caucus, judiciary, media, public service, and public opinion.
3. Identify and explain the specific roles of and relationships among elected officials, political staff and the public service in the context of the executive branch of government.
4. Provide a comparative, non-Ottawa centric, analysis that draws from experiences across Canadian jurisdictions and in other countries.

Approach

Panel — To guide and direct the project:

- Jim Dinning – former Treasurer, Province of Alberta (Chair)
- Jean Charest – former Quebec Premier
- Monique Leroux – Chair of the Board, President and CEO of Desjardins Group
- Kevin G. Lynch – Vice Chair of BMO Financial Group; former Clerk of the Privy Council
- Heather Munroe-Blum – Professor of Medicine and Principal Emerita of McGill University, Chairperson, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board

Advisory Council will provide added perspective and input to the Panel, and will be comprised of Canadian leaders with diverse experience in governance, policy and politics:

- Red Wilson – former President & CEO of Bell Canada (Chair)
- Penny Ballantyne - Secretary to Cabinet and Deputy Minister, Gov. of the Northwest Territories
- Ian Bird – President, Community Foundations of Canada
- Ian Brodie – former Chief of Staff to PM Harper, Dir. Research, UCalgary School of Public Policy
- Michael Coates – President and CEO, Americas Region, Hill+Knowlton Strategies
- Dan Gagnier – former Chief of Staff to former Quebec Premier Jean Charest
- Edward Greenspon – Managing Editor, Energy, Environment and Commodities, Bloomberg News
- Frank Iacobucci – former Supreme Court of Canada Justice
- Shelly Jamieson – former Ontario Secretary of Cabinet
- Monique Jérôme-Forget – former Minister of Finance, Québec
- Marcel Lauzière – Executive Director, The Lawson Foundation
- Pierre Lortie – Senior Business Advisor, Dentons Canada LLP
- Janice MacKinnon – former Minister of Finance, Saskatchewan
- Sir Gus O’Donnell – former UK cabinet secretary
- Robert Prichard – former U of Toronto President, Chairman of the Board at Bank of Montreal
- Chuck Strahl – former federal cabinet minister
- Stephen Toope – Director of the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs
- Murray Wallace – President & CEO of Granite Global Solutions

Secretariat

To support and coordinate the Panel’s work, a project secretariat will include:

- Julie Cafley – Vice President, Public Policy Forum (Project Manager)
- Lori Turnbull – Associate Professor, School of Public Policy and Administration, Carleton University (Research Director)
- Sara Caverley – Communications Coordinator, Public Policy Forum (Project Lead)

Timing

Planning and organization has occurred over the late-summer and early fall 2014. Much of the project work will take place over the fall and winter months, 2014-15. A joint meeting of the Panel and Advisory Council is scheduled for January 12, 2015 in Toronto. Release of the project Final Report is planned for the spring of 2015.

Communication and Engagement

The Panel's Final Report will highlight key findings and propose recommendations for consideration. The Report will be published in both official languages and shared with elected representatives, senior public servants, and other stakeholders in the broader community across Canada.

The Report will be disseminated via a number of communication platforms and engagement activities. Panel members will be invited to present the findings to groups such as:

- The editorial boards of *La Presse* and *The Globe and Mail*
- Council of the Federation, summer meeting
- Meeting of provincial and territorial Clerks
- Federal Clerk and Deputy Minister retreat
- Canadian Council of Chief Executives
- Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
- K-12 sector

